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support those of his colleagues. However, chiefs and others do sometimes manage to play off one administrator against another where there are differences of interest between different departments of the Administration, and occasionally appeals by Ngoni chiefs to high Administrative officials against the actions of their juniors are successful. It is easier for Ngoni to exploit the much greater differences of interest between the different sections of the non-African community, officials, missions, planters and European and Indian traders.

In the early years of this century it appears that the chiefs were approached by labour recruiters, planters, and missionaries who wished to gain their favour and utilize this to their own advantage. It is difficult to gauge to what extent this practice continues. There are one or two recent instances where the missions have clearly recognized the importance to them of securing the goodwill of an Ngoni in high authority, and it would also appear that some high-placed Ngoni have utilized their position to gain from the missions services which might not otherwise have been so readily available to them. With the cessation of labour recruiting there has been no opportunity for recruiters to offer presents to chiefs to sweeten their way. The nearest modern equivalent to this practice is found in the facilities sometimes provided by mine managers in the Copperbelt and elsewhere for Ngoni and other chiefs to visit their tribesmen working there, but with the increased stabilization of labour at the mines this arrangement has declined in importance. Traders have been known to offer bribes to chiefs, but so far as can be judged, money and goods handed over in this way often bring no return, and indeed some of the objects for which bribes are offered are plainly beyond the power of the person concerned to grant. Planters also seek to gain the support of those with influence in tribal and village life. In matters of this kind it is difficult for the observer who spends only a short time in the area to come to any quantitative estimates, but it is my impression that as compared with comparable situations in West Africa, as reported in the literature, there is little bribery in Ngoni society. The first reason that suggests itself is the poverty of the Ngoni in relation to their European and Indian neighbours. Ngoni do not control any rich natural resources, save perhaps for a few timber trees, with which they might be persuaded to part. The only form of wealth they possess which is of value to their neighbours is their manpower. This was once worth buying and perhaps could be bought. Now the chiefs and headmen do not have the authority to order their people to go and work for a particular employer. Even if they did, Ngoni make

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delegated a certain amount of responsibility, such as the collection of licence fees or the holding of a court not recognized by the Administration but supplied by the county clerk with the apparatus of official forms. The would-be chief then argues that the rural district in which he lives has always been distinct from the rest of the county and that it is too far for the people in it to attend at the county court. No attempt of this kind since 1920 has been successful, although the recent dispersal of villages into reopened land outside the reserves has increased the distances some litigants have to travel to the county court, and hence the number of disputes referred to these unrecognized local leaders has increased.

4. *The chief and his people*

The chief interacts with his people in a variety of situations. He receives their presents of beer and other valuables, he presides at county meetings, and organizes the royal hunts. He visits them in their villages when there are important celebrations and festivities and they go to him with their requests and complaints.

Ngoni offer beer as one of their principal expressions of hospitality, and in a formal beer party the ordered pattern of the social structure is acted out in the distribution and dispensation of the various jars and bowls of beer.[11] One traditional obligation is to provide a jar of beer for the head of the segment. Everyone belongs, or belonged, to a hierarchy of segments so that there were many people who ought to be honoured in this way at every party. In practice, since beer is heavy to carry, few jars move outside the village in which they are brewed, but a distant political superior is sometimes called in to a village to attend a beer party at which he will be honoured in this way. In the chief's own village the chief lives close at hand and beer is provided in much the same way as for the headman in an ordinary village. When beer is brewed by important people in the capital and regal villages they often call the chief to come and visit them and enjoy their hospitality. The chief is not so frequently called to beer in commoner villages, but on an important occasion such as the formal installation of a village official, or the formal announcement that a village has moved to a new site, it is appropriate to invite the chief to attend. A chief may also be honoured by his affines with beer brewed for him in the same way as any other man, but there is some disagreement about the appropriateness of this, for the chief 'has exceeded all others'

[11] See Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 217-19, for the rules of and attitudes towards beer drinking.

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which we shall be more directly concerned with the smaller groupings of Ngoni society. There are, however, a few points that must be mentioned here.

In Fort Jameson and in a few of the towns on the Northern Rhodesia railway line there are Ngoni members of the Native Urban Courts. These posts are largely in the gift of the Native Authority although they are not paid by the Native Treasury. The man recommended by the Paramount Chief to the Administration is usually the one appointed, and he acts as a representative of the Native Authority in the town as well as carrying out his duties in the court. He is likely to act as host when a chief visits his town, and messages are sometimes sent through him to men and women who are wanted in connexion with affairs in Ngoniland.

Every few years or so a chief goes to visit the towns. Here he is received by his people and those of other Ngoni counties, and may be given substantial presents. The Paramount Chief is sometimes called to Lusaka by the Administration to attend some function, and newly appointed chiefs go to a school near there, where courses of instruction are held for them. Thus although migrants may leave their villages and not return to them for many years, there are opportunities for them to keep in touch with rural happenings. Most of their contacts are with their kinsfolk, who visit them or write to them, but there are also these links with the political system of the tribe. When political offices have to be filled, not only Ngoni living rurally are considered but also those in the towns whose whereabouts are known. Sometimes the fare is sent for the lorry journey back to Fort Jameson if the town-dweller has no money.

There is little contact between the Fort Jameson group and other Ngoni groups. In 1914 envoys came from the northern Nyasaland group in order, it is said, formally to confirm Mpezeni as Paramount Chief of the Fort Jameson group, but there does not seem to have been any subsequent contact between the heads of the two groups. Individuals from northern Nyasaland from time to time find their way into Fort Jameson District, usually while searching for work on the tobacco farms, in the same way as men from other tribes. These immigrants may persuade some of their relatives to join them and so build up sufficient following to set themselves up as village headmen.

Contact is naturally closer with the two Nyasaland counties formerly under Mpezeni and many Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia have relatives across the border. The border twists and turns, and there is no physical indication of its existence on the ground save

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for a few heaps of stones hidden among the trees on the tops of hills. People visit back and forth freely, except for the control imposed at the customs barrier on the one lorry road. Many people grow vegetables in Nyasaland, where there is more land, and sell them in Northern Rhodesia, where there is a better market.

While this territorial proximity gives rise to a multitude of ties linking individuals across the border, it does not lead to new political relations between the counties with a common boundary. Such political relations as do persist are survivals from the old order. Although the formal structure of the Native Court system, as determined by the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Administrations, *does not permit it, cases sometimes come on appeal from the Nyasa-*land counties to Mpezeni. There is official visiting between chiefs across the border, and when the Paramount Chief is short of food he may ask the Nyasaland chiefs to send him a few baskets of maize. But despite the nearness of the Nyasaland chiefs to Mpezeni in spatial terms, their political interests lie mainly in the opposite direction. They are the only two Ngoni chiefs in that district of Nyasaland and most of the chiefs whom they meet are Cewa. Their Administration is separate from that in Northern Rhodesia, their laws are different, and they look towards Zomba rather than Lusaka as the seat of Administrative power. We have noted how Mpezeni I contemplated moving into Nyasaland in 1897. As late as 1922, when the Native Reserve scheme was under discussion, Mpezeni II made some preliminary soundings on moving across the border, but already by 1946 such projects were overshadowed by the prospects of federation for the two countries of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The people of the two Nyasaland counties are subject to the same general influences as are their Northern Rhodesia neighbours in such matters as increasing dependence on an exchange economy and the development of a cognatic or omni-directional kinship system in which links can be traced through spouses as well as through fathers or mothers. Yet even in economic activity there are significant differences. In Nyasaland, Africans grow tobacco for sale, while the Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia are not able to do so; recruiting for the Rand gold-mines is allowed in Nyasaland and prohibited in most of Northern Rhodesia, including the Fort Jameson area.

The annual meetings of the African Provincial Council of the Eastern Province are attended by representatives from each tribe in the province, two people from Fort Jameson township, the Provincial Commissioner and sometimes a representative of the

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(35,107). It is difficult not to assume that many Nyanja had formerly called themselves Ngoni.

Table II

	1926	1931	1945
Mzimba district			
Ngoni	25,484	24,627	44,948
Tumbuka	46,029	78,483	89,135
Cewa	14,041	2,411	21,891
Yao	20	—	—
Tonga	3,032	605	32
Nkonde	141	—	—
Others	334	156	202
Total	89,101	106,282	156,208
Ncheu district			
Ngoni	64,023	46,308	15,242
Cewa	11	4,372	2,815
Nyanja	334	25,393	60,400
Cikunda	360	940	1,336
Yao	203	1,064	3,267
Nguru, etc.	—	—	4,448
Others	13	278	182
Total	64,944	78,355	87,690

Since the two Ngoni kingdoms are the subject of this book and not the secession states, the position of the rulers of those states as Native Authorities and the circumstances of their secession from the two main groups will not be examined here. The three secession states in the north were under Chiefs Ciwere and Maskambewa in Dowa district and Jere in Kotakota district. The four connected formerly with the central Ngoni were under Chiefs Kacere and Kacindamoto in Dedza, Mausla in Lilongwe and Vumbwe in Cholo.

In the 1930's, when I was living sometimes in the northern kingdom, sometimes in the central, and for a time in the Ngoni state under Chief Jere, I was aware that the existence of the two kingdoms and of the seven secession states did not preclude a great deal of contact between the Ngoni of the different areas. The stream of travel in Nyasaland from south to north and from north to south along the one trunk road, brought Ngoni as visitors from one kingdom to the other, from the smaller states to both kingdoms, and from 'the Ngoni of the dispersion' living in towns to visit their relatives and friends in the Ngoni kingdoms and states. These visits might be social, to see parents or to marry a wife; they might be for economic purposes, to invest in or sell cattle, to supervise cotton or tobacco marketing; or they might be for ritual purposes such as mourning. When I travelled in the central Ngoni kingdom in 1936 with Y. M. Cibambo, the historian of the northern

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not eat so much as other people. He must leave enough for others or he would be ashamed. He would take a few lumpé of porridge from one wooden dish (*ingcwamlo*) and then hand the other dishes to those around him. Each day one beast had to be killed from the house of each wife of the *inkosi* in turn. It was their food and they could not cease killing. The *inkosi* had his own great garden. After hoeing the *indluna* of the *indlunkulu* called all the village people to come and plant these gardens first before their own. They did this because if a man was hungry, he went to the *inkosi* and said 'I am hungry' and he was given food to eat.

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In this account it is clear that the daily life of the Paramount had both private and public aspects. In private he was vulnerable to attacks from enemies. Hence he depended on the services of a trusted attendant to see that no sorcerers could make bad magic from his excreta; and he ate no food except that prepared by his own wives and mothers. On the other hand, in public he appeared as the generous and ceremonious ruler, providing food, beer and snuff for his visitors, and himself practising that restraint in eating which was characteristic of Ngoni good manners both from host and guest.

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In addition to the daily routine of sharing food with his immediate entourage and chance visitors, the Paramount had special feasts known as *isiphoko*. These feasts, as described by Cibambo, were related to the bringing of tribute, thus emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the gifts passing between the people and the Paramount.

¶ Along with the tribute the *inkosi* had his feasts with which he wanted to feed his people. At an appointed time the *inkosi* and his wives and mothers prepared beer and three or four beasts for his men and women. Men ate their meat in the kraal but the women at the *indlunkulu*. All the people thanked him everywhere, including the women, and the men were thanking with dancing. Even although people were not called by the *inkosi*, yet many people came to his village to beg food from the *inkosi*. Also by telling the *izinduna* the *inkosi* would invite people to eat with him, and many would come from far away. The wives of the *inkosi* and his mothers were cooking soft or hard porridge, with different *imbido* (relishes) so that the *inkosi* could give them to his people. They would all be waiting in the kraal. A generous *inkosi* liked to stay in the kraal so that his food should be sent there in order to feed both notable people and poor people. He would be watching whom to give food to.

In this way although there was tribute (*imisolo*), it was not very burdensome. People did not complain to the *inkosi* about it. It was as if they were playing, because of the dancing. Those who had no wealth came to the *inkosi* and begged him to help them. The *inkosi* gave cattle to these people without asking them to pay again, because he said 'The people and the cattle, they are all mine. They are eating each other.'

There was an apparent contradiction here. On the one hand there was true reciprocity, that of the people who brought tribute or gifts and in

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second and third, and the finisher, at the place of dancing in the kraal. At such times each one when called rose and danced *umgiya*, repeating his names. This was called *ukubika izinkalipi*, reporting the heroes or the fierce ones. This is still being done today. The *inkosi* thanked the people who brought the skins by giving them a beast or a goat. When they were dressing the meat and eating it, they kept on dancing *ligubo* and crying the war-cry. At such times the women went along with the men to help them dance *ligubo*. They made the responses to the songs and jerked their necks.

All such things the *inkosi* divided among his houses. The big house had a big share, but especially his mother's house. She should have most. Even if his real mother was dead, the big share had to go there, to her house, where her successor lived.

Visits to the Paramount, whether for a particular occasion or as a matter of routine, were hedged about with ceremonial. It was expected that *alumuzana* and other important people who lived near enough would visit the Paramount frequently and, according to some informants, they went every day in pre-European times.

No one could approach the Paramount except through one of the *izinduna* of the royal village, and the correct person to approach was the *induna* of the *indlunkulu*. Visitors were expected to wait at the gate of the kraal and put down their spears. When they were brought by the *induna* to the Paramount, they greeted him with '*Bayete*'. Then they sat down and the Paramount told the *induna* to greet them, and they replied '*Yebo, inkosi*'. This custom of indirect approach to the Paramount has been maintained. Early travellers in Nyasaland spoke of observing it, and when I was there it was considered outrageous manners on the part of any European if he penetrated immediately to the presence of the Paramount, without going through the accustomed channels.

The Paramount was both greeted and thanked for gifts of food, beer or snuff, with '*Bayete*'. If he moved from the kraal, all present said '*Bayete*'. If anyone had to leave his presence, he crouched low and murmured '*Bayete*' as he went out. Cibambo described this punctilious formality of thanking for gifts in the Ngoni manner.

When receiving presents the Ngoni thanked the giver by taking them with two hands, even though it was a small present. Afterwards they thanked the giver by his *isibongo*, clan name, openly. They said that receiving a thing with one hand showed that you derided it and did not put any value on it. When receiving a present from bigger people or from a chief, some words of respect were added to the *isibongo*, such as '*Baba*', '*Nkosi yami*', '*E-Jere*'. Often the receiver if he was much pleased with the present added some *isitokoso* to the clan name, if he knew them. Those near him or some further away helped the receiver by thanking loudly after him. If what he received was food, he thanked at the beginning, and after eating the food he thanked again. If such a present of food was given to a body of people, the leader in the company first led the others in

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when eating meat. The lesser wives sat on the ground, which was cleaned and smeared often with cow's dung.

The second *induna* of the village was the one who put the meat on the *ingcwombe*, or big platter of the *inkosikazi*, and placed it before her. She herself or her *nhlanzi* (co-wife) divided the meat for the other women, the wife of the *induna* helping her. After they had eaten, each *inkosikazi* called for an *ingcwombe* from her house for the meat to be given to her attendants.

The Life of the Royal Women
by NaNdumbu

formerly the big wife of the late Chief Njolomole Nzunga I in the central kingdom

¶ Old Njolomole had many wives, great and small. His huts were well made, and in the middle was the 'big house'. They made a fence to go round all the huts, and its appearance was very good. [361 351]

He was fond of sitting on the *bwalo*, and all his wives cooked *nsima* and took many baskets to the *bwalo*. He himself ate alone, but afterwards gave food to the big people and they in turn to the children who were waiting on the *bwalo*. If a stranger came, he did not lack food, for the chief gave food to strangers and beer. So all strangers praised his behaviour. And he was known far and wide in the land for his comely behaviour. [574]

When the days for *ngoma* were near he was going to the stores to buy many cloths to divide them to all his wives. Especially he was giving them to NaNdumbu his big wife to divide. Those cloths were all of one kind. On the day of dancing *ngoma* all the women wore these cloths and came on the *bwalo* with the chief. The people were astonished to see the women dressed alike. Njolomole excelled among all the people, and all praised him.

In the hut of NaNdumbu there were girls to sweep and to pound, and NaNdumbu was just sitting, no pounding for her.

Njolomole was very fond of hunting and when he killed animals in the hunt he divided them among his wives. Then he died and left his wives. From that time his wives have been very poor, and some have gone away to their own homes. Those who are here have been married by other men. Although the men dance *ngoma*, those women cannot dance it because they were greatly praised when they danced with fine cloths, but they cannot dance with poor cloths, no. So when people dance they just look on. Those women can dance *ngoma* in other villages, but here in their own village, no. Because they grieve very much to see the tomb of their husband who was dancing with them.

The Clothing of Women
by Yesaya Cibambo

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¶ Today Ngoni women are not easily recognized because they have taken foreign customs of clothing. Long ago Ngoni women were easily distinguished by their hair. They did not shave their hair except when their husband died. It was washed carefully and oiled and combed upwards to the top of the head in the *isihlutu*. The oil was *ipehla*, clarified butter. This was done every two or three days, or every day if they were grand women. They decorated it with small strings of beads dangling from a [301]

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and the circular court-house in a commanding position on a small hill with a big open space all round it.

There were several places in this village which were referred to as the *bwalo*: they included the open space within the reed fence of the Paramount's section, the much larger open and unfenced space round the court-house, and the more restricted spaces round the huts of the *induna* and of the headman. The meaning of the term *bwalo* was always slightly ambiguous in this village since it was often used for the verandah of the royal residence, as well as the open space in front of it. The central Ngoni custom of surrounding the huts of important men and women with high reed fences with a narrow opening, made it easy to say '*ali pa bwalo*', 'he is on the *bwalo*', so that it covered either the verandah of the hut or the space inside the fence. The local usage of *bwalo* by the Cewa people more often denoted the open space in the middle of the village where the men congregated to sit and talk and drink beer.[1] The connotation of *bwalo* in Ngoni villages in the central kingdom was usually in terms of the big house and the space in front of it within the fence.

In Maganga the place to which the name *bwalo* was most often applied was the space within the reed fence surrounding the Paramount's large brick residence and the outbuildings. When I lived in one of the outbuildings at the back of the house, I was said to be living *pa bwalo*; and it was also alluded to as *pa cigodlo*, that is in the enclosure where the Paramount's children lived behind the big house. His daughter's hut was in this section, on the north side, and beyond her hut was that of the *mlomo wenkosi*, who was also the Paramount's brother-in-law, since he had married the Paramount's sister and was the brother of the Paramount's wife. In the other buildings within the reed fence lived several servants of the household, and at the kitchen end of the brick house lived the girls who assisted the Paramount's wife with cooking and looking after her younger children.

When the Paramount built his court-house, he built some offices as part of it for himself, his *mlomo wenkosi*, his treasurer and the court clerk. The intention had been that official business would be carried out there, and relieve the big house of some of its many callers, and also ensure some measure of privacy for those who lived there. It proved very difficult to achieve this separation of public and private affairs, since the tradition that the Paramount was accessible to all his people at all times was persistent.

The entrance to the enclosure or *bwalo* of the big house was guarded in the traditional manner. If strangers (and all visitors were called *alendo* or strangers) arrived on the side road leading off the main road, they inquired from one of the huts there if the headman was present and waited till he arrived. The headman then went to tell the *induna* or the *mlomo wenkosi* that strangers had come, while they waited till the reply

[1] Scott, D. C. *Mang'anja Dictionary*. Edinburgh, 1892.

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574 643 came. One of these two officials usually came to greet them. He then informed the Paramount that strangers were present and took back the Paramount's greeting to them and asked their business. This was in turn reported to the Paramount, who arranged for their business to be taken care of and, if they were important people, sent an invitation for them to come to the *bwalo*, to which they were escorted by one of his officials and given seats. In due time the Paramount came out of his house and they gave him the *Bayete* and then he greeted them. As a rule he carried on all conversation through his *mlomo wenkosi*, and, after staying for a short time, often went back into the house and left his officials to entertain the guests. If the guests were visiting chiefs and *alumuzana*, word had gone round when they first arrived, and the senior men of the village, the *madoda*, gathered to greet them, and sat in a group as they did for court cases. Such conversations of a social nature took place as a rule in the courtyard where chairs and mats were placed. If it rained or was very hot they went onto the verandah which ran the whole length of the house. Never, so far as I could discover, did visitors come into the house unless they were close relatives of the Paramount or his wife.

Women visitors who came with the men or by themselves went through the same procedure of announcing themselves and stating their business. Then, if they were important people, they were escorted to the courtyard at the back of the big house where they were greeted by the Paramount's wife and by her daughter, who then settled down to talk with them, either out of doors or on the back verandah, according to the weather. It was usual for the Paramount's wife and daughter also to go and greet the men visitors on the front verandah or in the courtyard. 26 They did not stay, however, and if the visitors had come from far the 574 Paramount told his wife, after she had greeted them, to 'catch a fowl'. 643 When she returned to the back courtyard, children chased hens and there was squawking and yelling until the right number had been caught and killed. Pounding of maize began, the fowls were dressed and put in pots on the fire and other 'relish' was prepared of vegetables and groundnuts, and the flour was cooked to make porridge (*nsima*). The Paramount's wife and her helpers prepared the best pot-roast of chicken I have ever had. Food thus prepared was served to the guests on the front verandah in the traditional style, the porridge in food baskets (*nsengwa*), the chicken and other relish in small covered pots. The Paramount offered the food to his guests and then withdrew into the house. When they received the food, as well as when they had finished eating, they [576] thanked him with the traditional *Bayete nkosi*, adding, if they were of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans, some of the praise names or *izitokozo* of the Maseko Paramounts. To European visitors, and occasionally to Christian Africans, tea was offered with milk and sugar.

574 643 Viewed from the back *bwalo*, where I lived and watched all this happening and listened to comments, it was evident that the never-ending

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hospitality involved both planning and expense. The Paramount's wife had to keep enough food stocks on hand not only to feed her own large family and household, but also to be able to respond to expected and unexpected guests. The Paramount's personal annual salary at that time was £60, out of which he had to keep his family and household in food and clothes and school fees, and pay for the upkeep of his house. The bulk of the cereals and some of the beans and other vegetables used in his house came from his fields worked by hired labour. Another source of food supply was the market 'custom', a small toll levied on the produce sold in the weekly market, which was paid chiefly in kind and put in the storehouses on the Paramount's *bwalo* to be used to feed his guests.[1]

The Paramount not only gave food and drink to the expected and unexpected visitors to the royal village. From time to time he gave a feast to which the Christians of the congregation of the mission church were invited, as on one New Year's Day when I was staying there. He gave a feast to all the neighbourhood on the occasion of his daughter's wedding. From time to time he invited all his people to dance *ligubo* or *ngoma* at the royal village and provided beer for all and food for the *akumuzana* and the chiefs and their wives. The organization of these big feasts demanded planning on a generous scale and a large outlay in maize for porridge and meat for relish. No feast at the Paramount's village was complete without meat enough to satisfy everyone.

The visitors, the feasts, the dances, all had their focal point in the royal residence in the royal village. There were two other focal points in the village where large numbers of people came regularly, and made the place where the Paramount lived a centre which brought his people together and brought him before them as their ruler. These were the market and the court-house which also housed his offices.

Before 1939 the market in the royal village was unique in the area for its size and the service which it rendered to the countryside. At any one time on a Saturday there would be 600 to 1,000 people present. In 1938 a second market was opened by the Paramount at Nsipe at the southern end of his territory. They were definitely his markets in that he allotted space for them; fixed the days on which they were held; controlled the policing of the market and the strangers' huts where sellers arriving overnight could sleep; fixed the prices according to seasonal variations in supply; and, as we have seen, collected 'custom' in lieu of rents for sites. The market at Maganga served an area extending roughly 15 miles to the east, 15 to the west and 10 miles to the north and south. It stretched in the east to below the escarpment whence came bamboo and

[1] An average weekly amount of custom reckoned over several weeks was 10*s.* in cash, and a quantity of bananas, sugar-cane, vegetables and cereals amounting to two sackfuls and sometimes three. The cash was levied on meat, 1*s.* 9*d.* per cow, 1*s.* 6*d.* per goat or pig; and on mats, baskets, etc. at roughly 1*d.* in the 1*s.*

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the Paramount's interest in modern aspects of administration, especially after his visit to the course for chiefs held at the Jeanes School in Zomba in 1934. The old councillors, sceptical though they were of many modern innovations, recognized that they were in line with European ideas of administration, and also that they appealed to the younger educated men in the kingdom who had travelled and seen other countries and ways of living.

The Paramount married NaNdau as his big wife, and though, as the text mentions, he married two other wives when urged by the senior men, he sent them away after a year or two and NaNdau remained his only wife. She had an assured position since she bore him five sons and two daughters, the first-born being a daughter and receiving all the respect due to a Royal Sister. One of the brothers of NaNdau was chief of a division, and another was *ntlomo wenkosi* to the Paramount. She succeeded in maintaining much of the traditional pattern in the royal village and the big house. Her personal supervision of the household was thorough and competent. She exercised complete authority over the girls and women belonging to the household and arranged that the Ngoni custom of examining the young girls, including her own daughter, at regular intervals should be maintained. Her knowledge of Ngoni songs and dances, and her own skilled and graceful participation in the dances on state occasions, brought her before the people in her role as the big wife. At the feasts given by the Paramount she moved about among the people to serve them, and listened to complaints from the women about affairs in their villages which she then handed on to her husband.

The back verandah and all the outbuildings were the domain of the Paramount's wife. When I was there, she had some ten or twelve girls and women as well as several men working for her. They came and went if they had homes elsewhere, and the personnel changed often. All the household work was done by them: bringing water and fuel, pounding maize, and a good deal of the cooking, though this was closely supervised by the Paramount's wife. No beer was made in the household as it was against the rules of the church to which they belonged. In other Ngoni households of subordinate chiefs and *alumuzana* who were not Christian, the brewing of beer was a time-absorbing part of the household tasks and was shared by the different wives under the supervision of the big house. In Maganga, when the Paramount was entertaining unexpected guests and wanted to offer them beer, he inquired from his *induna* if anyone was brewing beer in the village, and sent for some for which he paid. When he knew beforehand that guests were coming who would expect beer to be offered to them as part of the Paramount's hospitality, he told his *induna* to see that beer was made in one of the village households, and he paid for it.

The cooking which went on in the big house kitchens was always extensive. The Paramount, his wife and six children had two meals a

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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643 day, and so did all the regular helpers in the household. The stream of
574 visitors was incessant, especially on Saturdays when the market was
264 held, and on the days when the Appeal Court was in session at the court-house adjoining the village. Not every caller was given food, but if they came from a distance it was always offered. In the setting of a modern brick house and a Christian household with only one wife, the Paramount had to provide a great deal of hospitality. The old tradition that *alumusana* and other important men visited the Paramount daily no longer held. But the weekly market and the court meetings, and the lorry service on the main road bringing callers from north and south, as well as administrative affairs which had constantly to be discussed and settled, made the Paramount's house and *bwalo* a very busy place.

Officials of the royal village and state officials

574 When I lived in the royal village for several weeks I was aware of a
643 never-ending stream of persons coming to consult or to work with the
645 Paramount. Well protected as he was by the Ngoni method of indirect approach and the surveillance of the village and *bwalo* by the *induna* of the big house and the *mlomo wenkosi*, the Paramount was still subject to constant inquiries from his office-bearers who needed his counsel, and from persons great and small from all over his kingdom who believed that he could help them. Among the village officials the *induna* of the big house worked closely with the headman of the village, and displayed unremitting efforts to see that all affairs in the immediate neighbourhood of the Paramount should go smoothly. They were constantly on the *bwalo* of the big house, or near the gate of the fence surrounding it. These two always turned up when visitors came, and sat on the verandah or in the *bwalo* with the other senior men, and kept an eye on all that happened. If anything went wrong in the village or the compound when the Paramount was away they were in great distress, as on one occasion when a man ran amok and threatened people with a knife. There was a strong tradition that around the Paramount and his living quarters everything and everyone had to be orderly and peaceable.

645 The *umbongi*, or praiser of the Paramount, was among the royal vil-
574 lage officials, though he only appeared on the *bwalo* when ceremonies took place there. He sometimes came when important visitors arrived if their visit was known in advance. He always came to the big dances and feasts held at the royal village. He was an old man, tall and spare, leaning heavily on a long staff, and many of the onlookers who listened attentively to his praise-songs showed nervousness when he began making personal remarks, for he had a sharp tongue and a flow of language.

Of the state officials the *mlomo wenkosi* was seldom away from the big house or far from the person of the Paramount. He had married the Paramount's sister, and was own brother to the *inkosikazi*, and his

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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kinship links strengthened and facilitated his official relations. If the Paramount went away visiting, he generally went with him, and if he were very busy or resting, then the *mlomo wenkosi* would act as his assistant and endeavour to meet the needs of the applicants. He was known on the register of Native Administration employees as the Paramount's assistant. 645 574

The other state officials who were constantly at the royal village included the clerk of the Appeal Court, the four councillors, the three messengers, and the treasurer. The clerk was in his office on most days, and when the court was sitting he kept the records. He also came to the big house when important visitors arrived and sat with the senior men. The four councillors and three messengers were all senior men, five of them of trans-Zambesi clans. The councillors conducted the cases in the court and reported to the Paramount, and spoke for him when he gave judgement. They and the messengers always came to the big house before the court opened, and returned there to eat food after the sessions were over. This was invariably an occasion for discussing cases and judgements and the general state of the country. The fact that the court was an Appeal Court, to which cases were referred from the six subordinate courts, enabled the councillors to estimate the efficiency of these courts in various parts of the country. Their private comments on the abilities of the respective chiefs to maintain order and judge cases in their courts were often caustic.

Several references have been made to the treasurer of the Paramount, a title assumed by Ishmael Mwale in view of his financial responsibilities for the central kingdom. The District Commissioner in his report for 1935 said: 645

> During the year the financial responsibility of the Native Authority was increased: he was handed over the keys of his safe at the Boma, and the District Commissioner only handled his cash for the purpose of checking. Gomani's clerk has acquired or given himself the name of 'Treasurer', and in this capacity frequently visits the Subordinate Authorities to make a financial inspection of their books, and to collect money which is surplus to their needs and bring it on charge in the main account. The District Commissioner's role has in consequence become akin to that of an auditor.
>
> Ishmael Mwale, the 'Treasurer', has shown ability for his duties. Not only is he capable of abstracting the revenue and expenditure of the Subordinate Authorities into a common ledger, but the time has now come when he should be fully capable of preparing draft estimates for the consideration of the District Commissioner.

The treasurer knew the country and the people of the different regions in a way that no other official of the Paramount knew them, and was therefore often called in for advice when petitions were brought in or complaints made. His eldest son married the Paramount's older daughter, and there was therefore a close tie between the two families.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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He was a student of Ngoni history and custom, and used his travels as treasurer to collect new information. He always intended to write a history of the central kingdom as Cibambo had done for the northern kingdom, but his public duties never gave him time.

In making contact with his people and keeping in touch with his officials the Paramount did not rely only on their visits to the royal village. Two or three times a year he toured his kingdom, accompanied by his *mlomo wenkosi* and the treasurer, and stayed at the head villages of the chiefs and also of other *alumuzana*. The treasurer spoke enthusiastically of the Paramount's habit of making himself known to his people and enabling them to present petitions to him in person. He met village headmen on their own ground, and *alumuzana* who were unostentatiously directing the affairs of their villages and areas, as well as the official chiefs or Subordinate Native Authorities. He saw for himself how his own regulations were being carried out and how the measures for agricultural improvement and cattle-dipping which the Government was promoting were being adopted. These visits in his own territory were followed by visits to Blantyre and Zomba and to the mining centres outside the country where his people were working. He was thus able to check on the conditions in the subordinate chiefs' areas which had been created by the prolonged absence of men from the villages.

The Paramount and changes in law and custom

Through his school education at Blantyre, his membership of a Christian church, and through attending the chiefs' course at the Jeanes School in Zomba, the Paramount stood between the old and the new in the changing conditions in his kingdom. After the 1933 Ordinance one of the changes in administration was that a Native Authority had to budget for income and expenditure in his area. The income for 1935 for this area was £959, made up of a share of the taxes; fifty per cent. of the yearly rental of stores; court fines and fees and beer licences. The expenditure was £832, under items of salaries to the Paramount and subordinate chiefs; salaries for messengers, councillors, clerks and policemen; payment of fourpence per tax to the headmen of the villages so that it was to their advantage to collect the full amount; and a small sum for uniforms, office expenses and such items as cash boxes and handcuffs. This budget for the central Ngoni kingdom was drawn up in consultation with the District Officer by the Paramount and his treasurer. It was a source of great pride to the treasurer that he had, as we have seen, his own key to a safe in the District Office where he put the tax money collected in the area, and drew out sums needed for expenditure in the Paramount's office.

In 1933, as already mentioned, a meeting of subordinate chiefs, *alumuzana* and headmen heard the Paramount's proposals for new regulations about village improvement and agreed to them. These regulations were

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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incorporated into the nation'. This, as we saw in Chapter I of Part I, was what took place in the Ngoni kingdoms. By the time they settled in Nyasaland, a hierarchical relationship had been built up between the clans based on the length of time they had formed part of the Ngoni kingdom. As the Swazi had their true Swazi, 'those found ahead', and late comers, so the Ngoni had their 'Swazi' clans, others from across the Zambesi, those who joined from this side, and the local peoples.

Dr. Kuper [1] summarized her description of the Swazi clan hierarchy by saying that it was 'neither precise nor static . . . a certain degree of mobility is recognized amongst the élite'. The Ngoni too had their own ways of adjusting a somewhat rigid system to suit their needs in spite of their recognition of the ranking of clans, and the fact that in the 1930's the kingdoms were ruled by an aristocracy. As among the Swazi, officials were appointed who did not belong to Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans. Much importance was attached, as also among the Swazi, to 'marrying up' and a number of instances of this were recorded, particularly in the central kingdom. In such cases a man, when explaining who he was, often gave the name of his mother as well as that of his father in order to impress upon the inquirer that he came from Swazi stock on one side, though his clan name, being his father's, did not show it.

Since some discussion of clans comes into every section of this book it will be useful to summarize here the main characteristics of the Ngoni clans in the two kingdoms. We shall be referring exclusively to the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, except when others are specifically mentioned.

Each clan was primarily a group of people with a common name. The families bearing this name might be found throughout the Ngoni kingdoms and states, in the towns and elsewhere, as the census figures quoted in Chapter I, Part I show. Their kinship was recognized firstly through clan exogamy, and secondly through the fact that when Ngoni people met a fellow clansman, they greeted him with particular warmth and both individuals were prepared to render each other mutual service. I met a number of the younger educated Ngoni who set out on a journey in Nyasaland, or to Northern or Southern Rhodesia, with the express purpose of looking for fellow clansmen, getting hospitality from them, and inviting them to visit Nyasaland and receive return hospitality. I was present at one or two such meetings in Nyasaland between Ngoni from the two kingdoms and the conversation began by establishing what branch of the Moyo or Gama clan they belonged to, and where the head village was situated. Within each kingdom each clan had a head village, and the head of that village was the head of the clan. In most of the Swazi clans the head of the clan was acknowledged as a *mulumuzana*. This correlation between being head of a Swazi clan and being a

[1] ibid. p. 233.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

614 The Ngoni were, as I have said, emphatic that the names on this second list should be included among the Swazi clans. It was headed in the northern kingdom by the royal clan and in the central kingdom by one of the most honoured clans, and all the clan names were in fact held in great respect. There are three possible explanations for their non-occurrence in the Kuper and Bryant lists. One is that the clan name and the *isitakazelo*, the ceremonial or address name, may have been interchanged, and the original clan name forgotten. Another explanation may be that fission of the clans took place on the march, and as a result new clan names appeared. Both these were likely and may account for some of the omissions. The third reason may be that on the march and after settlement the Ngoni may have forgotten the correct pronunciation even of their famous clan names, and the anthropologist may have made mistakes in transcribing them.

Reference was made earlier in the chapter to the fact that social mobility was found among the Ngoni aristocracy. One form in which this took place affected the position of individuals belonging to the royal clan. In the northern kingdom the chiefs as well as the Paramount all belonged to the royal clan, and descendants of the sons and grandsons of Zwangendaba and his brothers were found all over the kingdom. In the central kingdom, where none of the chiefs were of the royal clan, the descendants of Cidyawonga, the brother of Cikusi, were in the secession state under Chief Kacindamoto, and the children of the brothers of Cikusi and Gomani I were most of them living in the Portuguese Ngoni kingdom. Thus there were large numbers of the royal clan in the northern kingdom, some in the family groups of the chiefs, others living in their own or other villages; while in the central kingdom members of the royal clan were comparatively few in number and were excluded from all political power unless they were of the Paramount's immediate family. Members of other Swazi clans in the north felt they had to assert themselves against the dominance of the royal clan in social as well as political life. In the central kingdom it was the royal clan who asserted themselves socially because they had no political rights in the chiefdoms.

614 578 574 There was a general opinion that individuals bearing the royal clan name who were not of the immediate family of the Paramount or, in the north, were not among his subordinate chiefs, ought not to trade on their name. This meant in effect expecting to get hospitality and other formal recognition when visiting other villages. As one informant said 'If they come to a village they like people to tremble and say "A chief has come".' They wanted to be recognized everywhere as *makosana*, children of chiefs. The popular resistance to these claims came from two sources. One was the general public who did not see why an ever-increasing number of people bearing the royal clan name should get free food and beer—gifts which they would not hesitate to give to people

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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they acknowledged as rulers or direct sons of rulers. The other opposition came from the heads of the Swazi clans who saw their claims to recognition threatened by large numbers of these *makosana*. When such a person was announced a *muhumuzana* might comment to bystanders 'Who is this man? We do not know his father.' Then to save his face as well as that of the visitor, he would send a greeting to him and order beer to be supplied, while avoiding any elaborate form of entertainment. This subtle form of resistance to what were considered undue claims from lesser members of the royal clan was found everywhere.

In both kingdoms the Paramounts and chiefs, especially after 1933, appointed as officials for the kingdom and for the royal village, members of Swazi clans, but also, and increasingly, members of cis-Zambesi and local clans. This practice brought together in the royal villages and in the chiefs' villages men of the ruling aristocracy and men of the lesser clans, to share administrative responsibility, to assist on ceremonial occasions, and to take part on an equal footing in giving and receiving hospitality. This mingling on the official level was one of the reasons why marriages became more frequent between girls of Swazi clans and men of non-Swazi clans whose fathers had been promoted to official positions. The marriage of Paramount Gomani II's daughter to the son of his treasurer was an illustration of this. The daughters of families of Swazi clans were also sought in marriage by men of non-Swazi clans who, through their education, had got well-paid work in the Government or in commercial firms, and could therefore afford to give cattle for *lobola* for the girls. These were two instances of the type of marrying up which in the 1930's was lessening the sharp division in social life between Swazi and other clans. We shall see in Chapter IV, pp. 137, 140) that Ngoni fathers of daughters married to non-Swazi clansmen found a way of keeping their married daughters, as well as their sons, in their villages, particularly in the central kingdom.

Though the Ngoni clan system in the 1930's was, in Dr. Kuper's phrase, 'neither precise nor static', it was an integral part of Ngoni social organization. It was closely related on the one hand to the ruling aristocracy, and on the other to the social hierarchy. Both in the villages and in the national life of the kingdoms individuals belonging to Swazi clans played a leading part in social and ceremonial life, and carried on those distinctive Ngoni practices which their ancestors had brought with them from the south.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

854 house was still killed and eaten. The cloth came out of the
[432] store of cloth bought when cattle were sold, and kept in the hut of the senior woman of the father's house.

Visit to the mother's home

593 If, as was always the case in earlier days, the mother of the
574 new baby had come from a distant village, she did not see her own mother or her relatives, and they did not see the child until it was several weeks old, and considered by the senior women strong enough to undertake a journey. Then a visit involving much ceremony took place, for the wife's
[606] mother-in-law headed the party. The stiff and formal relations between the two sets of 'in-laws' had been eased slightly through the series of feasts and exchanges which preceded and followed the marriage ceremony. Face-to-face
[571] intercourse was, however, still very formal between the two families, and this first visit with the grandchild was in one sense an act of condescension on the part of the husband's family, since the child belonged to them. It was also a human and natural recognition of the eagerness of the young mother to see her own mother and display her child. Word was sent in advance by a messenger from the husband's village to announce the visit, so that the wife's family could make due preparation.

The main object of this visit was, in the Ngoni phrase, 'to show the child at its mother's home'. The young mother and
[606] baby, with her mother-in-law in the place of honour, sat outside the big house of the girl's father's family. Her father
[431] and his male relatives came to salute the child and to give it
[603] presents of beads, and in modern times small gifts of money as well. If the girl's father owned many cattle, he killed a beast, and they feasted that night, and the visitors carried home meat with them as well as the presents to the child. It was all very formal and correct, except when the young mother escaped for a short time to the circle of her sisters and girlhood friends, and exchanged confidences with them.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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After this formal visit had taken place, the young mother was free to visit her former home more often, and her relatives could come and see her and her baby in her husband's village.

Taking care of the baby

There were two special features of infant care among the Ngoni which were not found among the neighbouring peoples. One was the assignment of a nurse girl from outside the circle of relatives to care for a new infant. The nurse girl was chosen by the grandmother from among her dependent household staff, and was allotted to one particular baby. The girl, who was usually in her early teens and unmarried, was supervised by an older woman, also of the grandmother's household. This woman watched over the personal behaviour of several nurse girls, as well as seeing that they did their work properly as nurses.

The nurse girl took charge of the baby in the early morning and kept it with her all day until nightfall, bringing it back to the mother at more or less regular intervals for suckling. The mother played with the baby if she felt like it, and sent for the nurse girl to bring it to her if strangers came and she wanted to display the child. The Ngoni commended this practice by saying that their women kept clean because they did not carry babies about all day on their backs. They admitted at the same time that many infants grew greatly attached to their nurse girls, to the extent of being happier with them than with their mother. The nurse girls did not take little babies far afield. They stayed around within the fences of the household or ne[illegible] hand, helping with domestic chores, chatting to other nurse girls, helping to prepare meals, and eating with the baby's mother and anyone else who formed part of the household eating unit. At night, after she had given the baby to its mother, she went off to sleep in the hut of the older woman who was in charge of her and other nurse girls.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

primarily within his mother's household, but also, and especially immediately after weaning, in his grandmother's household. His needs for food and warmth could in fact be met in any of the households which formed part of his father's house and family group. There was no greater contrast for the small boy about the age of seven between this kind of life in the women's compound and his plunge into the life of the boys' dormitory.

The father's role with young children

During day-time in Ngoni villages Ngoni men and women lived almost in two separate worlds, the women in their compounds, the men by the kraal gate or about the village. When important visitors arrived the veranda of the 'big house' became a general meeting-place. Chiefs and leading men who had acquired chairs, among other modern household furniture, preferred to entertain their guests on their own veranda where they had some degree of privacy, and to offer them chairs to sit on instead of the kraal fence to lean against. This use of chairs which they found more comfortable to sit on brought many of the fathers of families back to their own verandas now and then during the day, though they continued to eat their meals with the other men at the kraal gate, and to go there to discuss village affairs and watch over the coming and going of the cattle.

This change of habit brought the fathers of families into closer touch with their young children, and it was accelerated by the growing Christian tradition in which fathers were more closely associated with certain aspects of their children's upbringing. It was the father who arranged for the baptism of the children which took place in the local church and was a ceremony attended by most of the village, whether Christians or not. When an evangelist or a school-teacher conducted evening prayers, as they often did near the kraal where anyone could come after the evening meal, Christian fathers sometimes carried a child in their arms to the prayers.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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351 old Ngoni families, and shining like marble, as did the hut and veranda floors. On this polished space, or else on the
574 veranda, the child's grandmother sat when callers had been announced, and from that vantage-point she could command the entrance through the surrounding fence, and agree to receive callers who had asked for admittance. Also in front
417 of the hut was another drying platform which was large enough to offer shelter from the sun in hot weather; the
343 dovecot where the 'royal pigeons' lived if the household was
[235] of the royal clan or distinguished enough to aspire to keep-
[554] ing pigeons. Off to one side was a hut for the goats at night and another, hoisted up on a platform, for the poultry. On the other side of the main hut were the grain stores, built up on low platforms. The maize stores were up to ten feet high and ten feet in diameter in these big households, and well-to-
[556] do women would have four or five of them bulging with maize cobs. There were smaller circular mudded bins for ground-nuts and millet. Behind the hut were two or three small huts where some of the helpers slept, and one of them
351 was generally a kitchen hut. Piles of wood, and bundles of
[284] thatching grass bound neatly with bark rope, were stacked against the fence.

There were innumerable objects around the compound of
351 interest to the small child prowling about. Two or three tall
412 wooden pounding mortars, so heavy that they could not be lifted and had to be trundled on their circular base from one place to another, stood near the kitchen hut, or were moved to the front if the women pounding had to watch children there. There were much smaller mortars for pounding ground-nuts, kept when not in use in the fenced-in veranda; and one or more large flat stones for grinding finger millet and bulrush millet. Baskets were of all sizes and shapes
351 from the small round food basket with a lid in which father's
415 food was carried to the kraal gate, to the wide shallow winnowing baskets, the deep round carrying baskets some as large as two feet in diameter, and the porous baskets used as

returning from work in the south about every two years or so, even if it was only for temporary residence in the village, mitigated, though only to some extent, the social disintegration and upheaval caused by the absence of so many young men.

In pre-European days, girls waited to marry for five to ten years after attaining puberty. For high-born Ngoni girls a further 'pre-marriage' ceremony and ritual took place immediately before marriage. This was after the girl and young man accepted by her as a 'lover' had been courting for some time but before any formal betrothal took place which involved the approach of the two families through intermediaries, and the discussions about the transfer of cattle. The Ngoni said that this pre-marriage rite was the equivalent for the girls of taking the head-ring for the men, because when it was held it was a public declaration that marriage was now possible for the girl, and she was acknowledged as having reached adult, that is married women's, status.

This ceremony began by the senior women of the girl's home sending for her father and saying to him: 'This child is now grown up. She is ready to be prepared to enter the state of adulthood.' One of the Ngoni names for the ceremony meant—'staying in the hut as if fasting'—a ritual practice associated with rain-making by the Paramount, and with taking 'medicines' for strengthening a new Paramount or chief on his accession. The girl, with her companion, spent two or three days in a hut, hidden behind upright mats curved so that no one could see round them. They were naked except for a long soft leather cloak worn over one shoulder and tied under the right arm. During this seclusion they had food brought to them by the senior women of the girl's house. While the girls were hidden away the village women cooked quantities of meat and brewed beer to entertain friends and relatives of the girl's father. During the feasting and drinking the senior women, with the men, danced the special dances and sang the songs associated with this ritual. Some of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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224 After the hunt the tally of kills was reckoned up, the game was carried home by the young men, and on the return to [262] the villages the meat was cooked and eaten by the men at the kraal gate. This was the occasion for going over all [521] the episodes of the chase, the skill of So-and-so, the fine organizing of the hunt by its 'owner'. No one mentioned the misses, no one's feelings were hurt, and there was a warm feeling of united and contented sharing in a good day's sport.

Lion-hunting was organized differently. Only former warriors and well-known huntsmen were called, and they sometimes took their sons with them as carriers. Guns as well as spears were taken, though the Ngoni liked to say, and it was often true, that they killed lions with spears only. Tracking a lion was dangerous and difficult, and when it was located in a patch of tall grass or reeds, the huntsmen made a circle round it, ready to attack when it broke cover. As in the chase, the one who stabbed the lion first, second and finally was noted. The dead lion was hoisted on poles slung from the shoulders of young men, and carried to the village where the hunt was organized. Here the party was welcomed and given food, the heroes were acclaimed, and the headman and seniors led the way to the village of the clan head, who called his men together to rejoice. When the augmented party reached the chief's or Paramount's village, [535] where all lions had to be taken, a war-dance took place in [555] the kraal, as of warriors returning from a campaign. The killer of the lion came out in front of the rest and danced his individual war-dance; he was hailed as a hero and new [273] epithets were added to his praise names. The whole party was given beer, a beast was killed for a meat feast, and then [574] the party thanked the Paramount in traditional fashion and went home.

It was in lion-hunting that young adults who were taken along felt the spice of danger, the thrill of success, and witnessed the pride of recognition for the successful killer by the Paramount and all 156 the Ngoni leaders.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

which the marriage lacked substance. We may look on these rites as fulfilling two social functions. Firstly they affirmed the position of the bride as wife of her husband, and secondly they emphasized the role of her parents as parents-in-law. In all the ceremonies of marriage the man and his wife were supported by members of their own groups, but we do not know exactly who these supporters were. They may have been agnatic kin, maternal kin, neighbours, or political superiors. From what we know of modern marriage it is likely that the composition of these groups of supporters was never rigidly determined.

The beginning of the marriage was announced at a ceremony which we may refer to as the gall bladder rite. It was held in the man's village and, after a beast had been killed, the bride was anointed with its gall and intestinal fat.[14] Another rite, which took place up to a year later, was held when the bride cooked food for her husband for the first time.[15] Before this ceremony she relied for her food on the man's other wives or his mother or grandmother. If the marriage was a successful one, that is, if the woman had borne live children and the husband was treating her well, the woman's parents showed their appreciation of their son-in-law by sending him, from time to time, presents of beer.[16] The son-in-law, or his father, rewarded the women who brought the beer with a present of meat. Later, the wife's parents brewed beer for the son-in-law and called him to their village so that he might formally enter his wife's mother's hut.[17] Later still, a ceremony was held at which the man and his wife's mother ate together.[18] At these rites of entering into the mother-in-law's hut or eating with her, a beast was sometimes killed by the father-in-law for the benefit of the man.

4. Relationship to affines

Apart from the specific ceremonial obligations there were continuing obligations of hospitality and assistance between the two groups. There was always visiting between them, and indeed

[14] This ceremony is called *lusiwa*, a word said to be of Zulu origin whose meaning I have been unable to trace. Informants were unable to say what it meant. The gall bladder is called *nyongo*, from the Zulu *isiyongo*. Rattray, op. cit. pp. 40 and 114, and Scott, *A cyclopaedic dictionary of the Mang'anja language spoken in British Central Africa*, p. 486, both translate the Nyanja word *nyongo* as spleen, but from Rattray's description of a marriage ceremony it seems that a gall bladder must have also been in use among the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland.

[15] *Mphikisa*. Cf. the Zulu *uku-phikisa*, to help or make to cook. Weise, op. cit. 'Expedition . . .', pp. 473-4, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 192 describes what seems to be a similar ceremony, which he says took place a few days after marriage.

[16] All offerings of beer which are carried from one place to another, to a son-in-law or to a headman or chief, are called *sipeko*. Cf. Zulu *uku-pheka*, to cook.

[17] Called *nenguvira*. Cf. Zulu *uku-ngenisa*, to enter another person's hut.

[18] Called either *nanyolesa*, from the Zulu *uku-dlesa*, or *kulyelana*, from the Nsenga *ku-lyelana*, both verbs meaning 'to eat together'.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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lives for some years with a European may leave him and enter into a proper marriage. The favourite wife of a chief who died a few years ago had earlier been the mistress of a European.

Christians must abide by the rules of their church or risk ecclesiastical censure. A baptized Catholic man may marry only a Catholic girl or he will be suspended from receiving the sacraments. A Catholic woman must either marry a baptized Catholic or obtain dispensation to marry a catechumen. A catechumen of either sex can marry another catechumen or a pagan. In addition Catholics cannot marry if the marriage would infringe canon law. Catholic cross-cousins, therefore, can marry only by concealing their relationship from the priest. In the Dutch Reformed Church a baptised person, or a member of a class of instruction, cannot marry a pagan or a Catholic without being suspended. Other missions have similar rules.

Locality is of some importance in influencing a man's choice. The bigger the village he lives in the more likely he is to take a wife from within it, but the belief still persists that it is better to find a wife from outside one's own village if possible. In a polygynous household a wife married from her husband's own village still does not rank as high as one who has been brought in from outside, of whom it is said 'her husband had to walk to get her'. The mechanisms by which people living in different villages are brought into contact are numerous,[4] but for finding a spouse the two most important are inter-village dance contests and visits to relatives. Teams of young people, usually all girls and young women, go from their own village to others in the vicinity to dance against the home teams. Young men stand around watching them and discuss among themselves the erotic possibilities of individual dancers. As darkness falls the dancers start back home, escorted by the young men who flirt with them on the way. At the weekends there are many young men back in the villages from their employment on the farms or in Fort Jameson and they sometimes gather into gangs of half-a-dozen or so, wandering from village to village in their best clothes, with dark glasses and walking sticks, looking at the girls' dances and trying to make assignations. This sort of flirtation is confined to the young and irresponsible, and it would be regarded as unseemly for a middle-aged man to pay much attention to the dances of young girls.

More respectable contacts are made by young people who go off to stay with their relatives in distant villages. Everyone has kinsmen and affines in many different villages, and it is the custom to visit back and forth for weeks at a time. A young man may go on several days journey to visit his relatives among the Cewa and Nsenga tribes, or to live for a while with a relative working on a distant farm. While he is away, he may meet a girl whom he likes, and arrange to marry her. The dance situation does not provide

[4] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 214 ff

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much opportunity for a man to assess his sweetheart's domestic efficiency and moral character, but he can get information on these matters from other people who live in her vicinity. When he sees a girl in a distant village where he is staying, he has more leisure to see what she is like and can ask his own hosts about her character. Girls visit in the same way as men, and if a girl is anxious to get a husband and fears she may not find one, she may spend most of her time visiting in different villages hoping to attract a suitable man. There is more time for visiting and flirting at the end of the dry season when there is little work to do in the gardens, but marriages are contracted throughout the year.[1]

Young men say that what they like in a girl is a light skin colour, a pretty face, and the ability to dance and to copulate well. Some men, however, say that such a girl might be all right to run after, but for marriage one would also need to know that she could cook porridge. Women say they like a man who is well dressed, who has a good job working for a European, and who has a parting in his hair. Women sometimes wear medicines which are believed to attract men, and men who have no good clothes may borrow the clothes of others in order to attract women.

3. Sexual partners

The relationship between a man and his wife, at least for the first years of their marriage, is spoken of principally in sexual terms, and the sexual activities of the couple are more closely defined by the marriage bond than are their residence and their economic life. Informants say that the reason for the existence of marriage is either 'the work in the house', a euphemism for copulation, or else 'clothes', that is, so that a woman may have someone to buy clothes for her. It is, however, much easier to improvise alternative solutions to the problem of clothing than it is to find alternative means of sexual satisfaction without coming into conflict with law and morality. Furthermore, while we have seen in the old days that the main emphasis was on the fertility of the woman, this has now shifted, and it is her skill in copulation rather than her success in childbearing that is emphasized. Fertility is still valued, but does not appear to form so important a theme in ceremonial, songs, and gossip as among other societies where the principle of unilinear descent has not broken down, and where, therefore, fertility either of a man's wife or of his sister, is a vital necessity for the maintenance of local structure.

The husband-wife relationship is one in which the man is apparently superordinate to his wife, but we shall see that in practice this superordination is not as clear-cut as might at first appear. It is furthermore a relationship in which there are certain prescribed mutual obligations, so that if these obligations are neglected, it is

[1] Cf. Young and Banda, *Our African Way of Life*, p. 66.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe. 591 241 343 241 962

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both man and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen. [492]

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting, there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboy reports to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care. 224 233 962

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly. 593 262 [252]

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain [554] [541] [439]

money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her.

10. *Forbidden and Enjoined Unions (Ngoni).*

The Angoni are patrilineal, and in the case of a mixed Ngoni-Chewa marriage the child always takes the clan (*vide infra*, Section IV) of the father, whether bride-price has been paid or not. The children of brother and sister may marry each other, but not the children of two brothers or half-brothers, nor the children of two sisters or half-sisters. As with the Achewa, so also with the Angoni it is no longer considered incestuous to marry someone of the same clan. 611 582 614

11. *Forms of Marriage (Ngoni).*

When an Mngoni wishes to marry, he sends a male friend without a gift to inform the girl's father of his desire. The father calls his wife, male relations and headman to discuss the matter; and, if they agree to the proposal, the friend returns with the news to the prospective bridegroom who, several days later, despatches his *anklosse* with a present to the *anklosse* of the girl. There are always two *anklosse* on each side, neither more nor less. A father is ineligible; and brothers, sister's sons and fellow-villagers are generally chosen, as they are more likely to be at hand if required at any time. The present is only symbolic, and generally takes the form of a goat, though in the case of a wealthy bridegroom it may be a cow or something equally substantial. This part of the procedure is known as *ku-onga*, and as soon as the present has been received by the bride's father, the marriage is valid in law. 584 [583]

A few days later, the groom sends a friend to conduct the girl to his house. She comes with several elder women and other girl friends, but her mother may not join the party. The bridegroom provides for them a feast of beer and meat in commemoration with his wealth. He presents beads to his wife, this ceremony being known as *ku-tewlera*, and sends a cloth (known as *nekuba*) to her mother, after which the women return home on the same day without consummation having been effected. [574] [431]

About a week later, accompanied by a small boy, the man proceeds by night to his father-in-law's house, and is given an empty house, where he sleeps with his wife. He must avoid being seen by any of the villagers, and therefore departs before daylight, going to a neighbouring village for food and rest, and returning on the following night, when the same precautions must be observed. [833]

On the second morning he goes back to his village, and after two or three weeks sends a friend to fetch his wife. This time she comes openly, and sleeps with him for two or three nights in any available hut, after which she returns to her father. [833]

The husband then begins to build her house at his village, and to pay the bride-price. This process is known as *kukomba*, or *kupereka mulobo*. The *mulobo*, or bride-price, may consist of cows, or cash, or other goods; and it varies in value according to the standing of the parties. If the bride is fully grown, payment should be completed within four or five months. Nowadays, however, Ngoni girls are generally married shortly before they reach the age of puberty, and in such cases a year or two may be allowed; but when the husband is unnecessarily dilatory, his father-in-law may oblige him to build a house near his own and to live there until he has fulfilled his contract; and until the bride-price has been paid in full, he cannot expect his wife to reside with him permanently at his own village. 583 591 [582]

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535 is now danced by villages. The important men in one village suggest
628 to another village that this dance should be held in the latter village. If this is agreed, beer is brewed in the second village and on the pre-arranged day many people from the first village come in procession from their village to the dance. The visiting dancers enter the cattle byre and start to dance. They are joined by people from the home village. The dancers are arranged in two lines, men on one side and women on the other, and the dance consists of a series of virtuoso performances by two or three men and women at a time in the space between the two lines, to the accompaniment of clapping and antiphonal singing. The dance is followed by drinking and more dancing. Later in the year, or in the next year, the host village goes to the home of the visitors, and the performance is repeated.

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535 Of more frequent occurrence are dances involving girls only. These
628 are usually held on Sunday afternoons, and as at the *ngoma* dances, at
883 least two villages are involved. Here the initiative is taken not by the important men but by the senior unmarried girl in the village. She invites a girl of similar status in another village with whom she is acquainted, or whom she has seen dancing, to bring a team of girls to dance in her village. This kind of dance is competitive in that the visitors are opposed by a similar team of girls from the home village, who dance separately from the visitors until, at the end of the session, the two teams combine. That team which has danced best is held to be the winner, although there is always great doubt as to which team this is. The girl who invited the visitors is responsible for seeing that the visiting team is fed, although beer is not provided. No work is done in the gardens on Sundays, so that these dances always attract a large number of onlookers. As with *ngoma*, a return match is danced at some later date. The pairs of villages that are linked in these dance exchanges are not always those that contain many people related to one another. One girl may ask an acquaintance in another village to find a team; in one case the girl who made the invitation did not know the name of the girl she was inviting.

Beer-drinking

273 Beer, water, and tea are the three main drinks of the Ngoni. The
[271] ordinary rules of hospitality govern the drinking of water, which is
[574] provided for the traveller whenever he asks for some. Tea is sold in
[272] the roadside stores known as hotels. Beer is more important socially

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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when the death penalty can hardly be exacted, or compensation made in the delivery over of slaves, they find it hard to satisfy demands and make a show of justice.

Now let us speak of the social life of the people. The Ngoni differ from most of the Central Africa tribes in their habit of living in large unprotected villages. The tendency of most of the other tribes is to scatter themselves in very little hamlets over a wide area, with scarcely a path of communication between the villages. Where war has harassed them they have built huge stockaded villages for their mutual protection, but as soon as assured peace has come again, the towns have split into numerous distant groups of houses. This seems to be caused by the dread and mistrust of one another which the people have through their superstitious belief in a evil eye, and in witchcraft, and through the perpetual little quarrels that arise. A carrier who was accompanying a friend of mine described this state very well when they passed a little village of four huts, and then a few hundred yards farther on an isolated hut. Holding up his hand he cried, "Look at Mr. Thumb saying to Messrs. Fourfingers, keep your distance."

The heart of a Ngoni village is the large circular cattle kraal. There all the court cases are tried, there the visitors are received, and there the dances are held. Round the kraal the village of beehive huts is built in regular rows, and then immediately outside the gardens begin. The village life takes the place of family life, and the headman is father of all the people. The boys after they have attained to twelve years of age or so live in huts by themselves, and the girls in huts on the opposite side of the village. These girls' quarters used to be most sacredly guarded, and any man found in their enclosure after dark could be killed.

The great part of the Ngoni nation consists of domestic slaves. They are people, or the descendants of people, who have been captured in raiding expeditions. But their position is not a hard one. If they are discontented they may change masters. They give their masters a little free labour, and in return are made members of his family; he espouses all their quarrels, looks after them in sickness, and shares some of his superfluity with them, but they have to share some of their necessities with him.

Polygamy was the universal custom of the people until recently. Now hundreds of polygamous unions are being dissolved every year. But in the rougher days polygamy was a necessary

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
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borne out in Roman days also, that the handier, and more artful and skilful people have usually a lower social morality than the fighting races. Our Ngoni came to Nyasaland as a moral blessing. The ordinary obscenity of the indigenous people was not for a moment tolerated among the Ngoni. It is very appalling to hear and see how degraded were the Tumbuka into whose land they came. A people among whom virginity was unknown, where family relationship was no defence, where men and women lived in an atmosphere that was charged with vice. But when the Ngoni came, many of the foul practices of the Tumbuka were punished with death. Their obscene dances were prohibited, many of their superstitious customs were banned, and generally a higher type of morality was superimposed.

The aristocratic Ngoni is a gentleman through and through. His word is absolute. When he gives a promise you may fearlessly rely on it. He does not steal, nor does he intrude on your privacy. I have heard the old men storm in a village because some boys stood around staring at me, or speaking. Before a superior they should sit down, and remain silent, or only speak in whispers. When they address you they always give you your family name of honour, or if they don't know it, round off each sentence with a "sire." When you come into a village you sit at the gate of the cattle kraal and wait for your reception. After a long time the elders of the village appear. Their courtesy is that the longer the wait the greater the welcome. For if they come out quickly they seem to say you had better clear out quickly. When they appear they sit down at some distance, and remain silent. You must not speak till you are spoken to. After a decent interval, they come forward, sit down, and leisurely say, "We see you, sire." Then you reply, "Yes, sire." That is the whole courtesy. Conversation may now begin. When you would rise to go, you first of all say, "Remain in peace, sire," and they reply, "Yes, and go thou in peace, sire." It is very courteous and friendly, and they accompany you along the path a little way, and again send you off with salutation.

Their village life is not without interests and amusements. During the day in the head villages there are continual trials in open court—trials which last for hours and days with continual speech-making. In the evenings the kraal echoes with the chorus of village dances. Quite the prettiest and most delightful dance is the village competitive dance which is held during the day. A